

LOWEN HAT-TRICK SINKS CLAPTON

Sports Mail Special Report

A FINE hat-trick from Lowen shattered Clapton at Loakes Park: but otherwise it was a dull game.

Wycombe Wanderers: Bunting; Beck, Lewis; Pullin, Roystone, Gale; Page, Horseman, Lowen, French, Hodges.

Clapton: Castle; Cooper, Kerr; Webber, Pope, Aldrich, Blakeney, Russell, Hoare, Harris, Brockwell.

Referee: E W Ruck (St. Albans).

Castle was felled by a tremendous left foot drive by Hodges and after he had recovered made a plucky save from Page, a last-minute Wycombe choice at outside right.

Wycombe went ahead in the seventh minute when LOWEN coolly collected a short cross from Page and walked the ball into the net. It was Wanderer's 100th goal of the season.

With Wycombe dominating the play and looking very dangerous in swift raids, LOWEN added a second five minutes later with a measured header from a long kick upfield by Beck.

A too-casual approach cost Wycombe the initiative and Clapton hit back with great spirit to reduce the lead in the 26th minute, with centre forward HOARE headed in from a centre by Blakeney.

A little later Hoare almost scored again but Bunting saved just in time.

A flashing header by Horseman was well saved by Castle, and then Wycombe were lucky to escape when a shot from the enterprising Hoare struck the underside of the bar and rebounded clear.

Although Wycombe had rather more of the play, the forwards were still too leisurely to turn their chances to advantage.

Half-time: Wycombe Wand. 2, Clapton 1.

A slow handclap from the crowd spurred Wycombe to greater endeavour and with better support from left-winger Hodges, several combined attacks extended the Clapton defence.

In the 70th minute Lowen was brought down and ROYSTONE took the free-kick. He scored direct with a tremendous drive, which surprised goalkeeper Castle.

Four minutes later, with right back Beck hobbling on the right wing, LOWEN scored with a long shot which soared into the far corner of the net.

Clapton were unlucky when Russell broke through but hit the upright.

RESULT:

WYCOMBE WAN. 4
CLAPTON 1

WYCOMBE TOP THE CENTURY

Wycombe 4 Clapton 1

WYCOMBE WANDERERS earned the slow handclap from their supporters at one stage, for their over-confidence against bottom of the Isthmian League table, Clapton. Wycombe's leisurely approach robbed the game of sparkle, but they still packed enough punch to slam unhappy Clapton to their 26th League reverse, and hoist their own goal aggregate for the season over the 100 mark.

A dashing start put Wycombe two up inside 12 minutes with goals from centre forward Lowen. But their complacency cost them the initiative later in the first half. A spirited rally and a neat goal by Hoare kept Clapton in the game.

Wycombe were still slow and unimpressive in the second half and not until right-back Beck was injured and had to move on the right wing did the Wanderers get going again.

Then skipper Roystone scored with a tremendous shot direct from a free-kick and Lowen again beat Clapton's goalkeeper, Castle, who gave a plucky display after being stunned by a kick in the first two minutes.